

Title: The Red Wisp

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Spirits high with
wine, I turned upon
the path
and made my way
with careful steps,
leaning on my staff,
my mind still in the
tavern hears the
dancers as they laugh,
smells the spices
from the cider, tastes
the tender fatted calf.

But soon these
thoughts have left me
as I creep into the
night.

I turn and look behind
me now, and seek the
tavern's light,
but the tavern and its
patrons have vanished
from my sight,
so I plunge further in
the darkness as I feel
my heart grow tight.

The creatures were
a-buzzing, they
filled the wood with
sound,
my mind now turned
to darker thoughts, of
my body found
dead and decomposing,
dead upon the forest
around,
my wife and children
weeping as they build
a burial mound.

The a vision struck
me as I walked
further in the wood,
A ray of crimson light
was dancing, as no
dancer ever could,
and dancing ever

towards me it
approached me where
I stood,
I clutched my chest to
calm it but my efforts
did no good.

"My child!" The
creature called to me,
its voice an eerie hum,
"I sense you are afraid
this night, I feel your
senses numb,
I hear your heart is
pounding now, as a
drum stick on a drum,
But your fears are out
of place, instead you
should fear what
you've become."

"I know not why
you've come here now
and set my mind to
stir,"
I stuttered as my
answer to the dancing
crimson blur,
"and I see now that you
intend me good, which
is as I would prefer,
but I assure you that
the man I am is the
man I ever were."

"I am here tonight to
right a wrong, the
wrong I most detest,"
replied the wisp, still
dancing, as still I held
my chest,
"You are but a humble
man, yet once your
soul was of the best
but now, these years
gone by, you no longer
are so blessed."

"I know that you still
think yourself a man
who's spirit's strong,
your heart is free of
wickedness, yet once
it sung a song,
a song of virtue pure
as gold, as pure as life

is long,
but now instead of
seeking good, you seek
to do no wrong."

"Virtue is a path, my
child, but the path
does not descend,
many travel up along
it, to reach the heights
they do intend,
but resting for a
while they stop, and
believe they've found
the end,
and smile meekly at
themselves, for an
achievement they
pretend."

With these words the
wisp's light blinked,
and vanished without
trace,
I then ran towards
home, through
darkened wood, at a
reckless pace,
At last I came unto my
home, that marvelous
old place,
I grabbed the glass,
and brought it near,
and saw a different
face.

First Place Winner of
the Britain City
Council of
Compassion's
Whispering Day
Poetry Contest.
2-14-01
-Ce'Nedra Willow